



Social Care Facilities Review Committee

...a voice for clients

A N N U A L R E P O R T
1 9 9 8 / 9 9 F I S C A L Y E A R



ALBERTA
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Office of the Minister

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski
Office of the Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta
Room 325
Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Mr Speaker:

I am honoured to present the Social Care Facilities Review Committee's Annual Report. This report summarizes the activities of the Committee for the period of April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Iris Evans".

Iris Evans
Minister

The Honourable Iris Evans
Minister of Children's Services
Room 107
Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister:

In accordance with the *Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act*, section 16(1), I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. The Committee has completed one year under its new mandate. This report summarizes the activities of the Committee for the period of April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999.

Sincerely,



Shiraz Shariff
MLA Calgary - McCall
Chair, Social Care Facilities
Review Committee

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Respect for the views of individuals is a key component of this government's commitment to the citizens of Alberta. This commitment is highlighted by the work of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. Listening to and reflecting the views of individuals receiving services provides a voice for those who, in some cases, are not always heard. Our government believes that all people have a right to be heard.

The comments from each individual contained herein, are important. Together, these remarks provide valuable insight to the government about the way people view the services they receive, and the way services are delivered across the province.

To the individuals who took the time to participate in the Committee's quality of service reviews, thank you. To Committee members, thank you for providing a voice for these individuals and for your commitment to providing a valuable resource for our review.

Iris Evans
Minister
Children's Services

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Social Care Facilities Review Committee began serving the people of Alberta in a new way this year. In 1997, following a mandate review, the focus of the Committee changed. Instead of inspecting facilities, the Committee now conducts quality of service reviews in social care facilities across Alberta.

Putting this new mandate into practice was challenging and rewarding. The new mandate brought many changes to procedures, and the Committee began to establish contacts and educate the community about its new role.

Eight citizens were appointed as members of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee for the 1998/99 fiscal year. Three Committee members stayed on from the previous year, and five new members joined them. Five of these members will continue to serve on the Committee next year, while three members chose to pursue other interests.

I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary Fennell and Ms. Irene Salisbury for their services to the Committee over the year. I wish them success in the future. Our sympathies go to Mrs. Marilyn Kumi on the death of her husband, Mr. George Kumi, on November 8, 1999. His contributions to the Committee were valued, and he will be sadly missed.

This year, Committee members visited adult social care facilities; most of these facilities are funded by Persons with Developmental Disabilities Boards. We heard from clients, family members, guardians, service providers, and staff members about the quality of services in these social care facilities. Most participants said they were very pleased with the quality of services they receive, although they often made suggestions for change and improvement. This annual report pulls all of these comments together, and provides a picture of the way users of services view the services they receive, and gives service providers an opportunity to hear their clients' views from an independent source. We were pleased to hear that some service providers chose to make changes based on comments in the reports.

Next year should prove to be very exciting. The Committee plans to move into the area of social care facilities for children, focusing specifically on day care centres. We are thrilled about this opportunity, and will continue to use continuous learning and effective networking as strategies to provide the best community services.

Shiraz Shariff
MLA Calgary McCall
Chair, Social Care Facilities Review Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In the 1998/1999 fiscal year, the Social Care Facilities Review Committee consisted of eight public members and one chair.

Shiraz Shariff, Chair

Shiraz graduated from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Social Work.

Mr. Shariff currently serves as Chair of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, Chair of the International Co-operation and Governance Advisory Committee, Deputy Chair of Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts, as well as a member of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and a member of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Standing Committee.

Prior to assuming his office as an MLA, Shiraz worked as a Child Welfare Worker for Alberta Family and Social Services and taught at Mount Royal College in the department of Social Services.

A believer in community services, Shiraz has served in various voluntary capacities with Federation of Calgary Communities, Alberta Multicultural Advisory Council, UNICEF, Calgary Multicultural Centre, Partners in Citizenship, University of Calgary, Mount Royal College, and Alberta Vocational College.

Carol Brown

Ms. Brown has been a member of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee since 1994. She has been actively involved as a volunteer in her community for more than 25 years. She has managed a variety of private businesses and is currently self-employed.

Rosemary Fennell

Ms. Fennell has been a member of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee since 1992. She holds a nursing degree and has extensive experience as a volunteer in various agencies, including Rockyview Hospital and the Bishop Grandin Band Parents Association.

George Kumi

Mr. Kumi joined the Committee in 1998. He worked for many organizations such as the Calgary Multicultural Centre, Scouts Canada, United Way of Calgary, and the Alberta Housing Corporation.

Thomas Lukaszuk

Mr. Lukaszuk holds a Bachelor's degree in Education. He is self-employed, operating and managing a consulting firm. Mr. Lukaszuk has worked as a translator/interpreter for the Edmonton Police and the Crown Prosecutor's Office.

Mickey McMaster

Mr. McMaster has been an active leader in his community for many years. He served on the City of Red Deer's Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board, was a Cub and Scout leader, and a member of the Christmas Bureau of Red Deer. He graduated from NAIT with a Business Administration Diploma.

Irene Salisbury

Ms. Salisbury has been a member of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee since 1994. She has been an active member of her community. Her diverse business background has helped build her decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Jean Wilkinson

Ms. Wilkinson graduated with Honours from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education. Her volunteer activities are varied, including Co-Chair of the Special Events Committee for the opening of Winspear Centre for Music, leadership roles in Toastmasters International, and an organizer for Voyageur Canada. In 1993, she was presented with the Governor General's Community Medal for service to her community, province, and country.

Edith Zawadiuk

Ms. Zawadiuk brings 37 years as a home economist to her role on the Social Care Facilities Review Committee. She has also served as an executive member of the University of Alberta Senate, has received recognition from the Saddle Lake Band Council, and received an honorary award from the Canadian Society of Extension.

Two Committee members, Ms. Rosemary Fennell, and Ms. Irene Salisbury, did not seek re-nomination to the Social Care Facilities Review Committee for the 1999/2000 fiscal year. We thank them for their work and contributions to the Committee.

Sadly, Mr. Kumi passed away.

In April 1999, five new members will be joining the Committee, for a total of ten public members for the 1999/2000 fiscal year.

COMMITTEE'S MANDATE

As a result of a mandate review initiated in 1996/97, the Social Care Facilities Review Committee changed its focus. Beginning in 1998/99, the Committee began operating under a new mandate: to provide the Minister with a citizens' view of the quality of services experienced by clients and their families. The Committee now reviews and inspects facilities as mandated in the *Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act* by conducting quality of service reviews. The Committee listens to clients and their families as they speak about the quality of the services provided by facilities where they receive services.

To fulfil its mandate, the Social Care Facilities Review Committee (SCFRC) developed the following operating principles:

- Facilitate communication without bias or prejudice.
- Focus on the *current* mandate of the SCFRC.
- Promote awareness of the mandate.
- Respect the interplay of rights and obligations of all parties.
- Empower clients by providing a "Voice" for them.
- Be objective, open minded, and receptive to all parties.
- Present a professional manner and appearance.
- Listen and understand the needs and concerns of the clients.
- Be observant of the environment.
- Have mutual respect for all SCFRC members and government representatives.
- Operate in a way that makes optimal use of the resources available.

SOCIAL CARE FACILITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE

The *Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act*, establishing the Social Care Facilities Review Committee, was proclaimed in June 1980. The Committee now fulfills its mandate under the Act by conducting quality of service reviews to provide a voice for clients and their families about the quality of services they are receiving in social care facilities across the province.

The Committee consists of one Member of the Legislative Assembly, who serves as Chair, and eight private citizens with varied backgrounds, expertise, and work experience. The legislation allows for a maximum of 12 members, including the Chair. The private citizens reside in rural and urban communities throughout Alberta, and serve part-time on the Committee. These members are appointed by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta through Order in Council and are not employees of the provincial government.

Quality of Service Reviews

In 1998/99 Committee members conducted quality of service reviews in adult social care facilities by visiting the facilities and listening to clients and their family members and guardians speak about the quality of the services they receive.

Committee members arranged, with the service providers at each facility, a suitable date and time to conduct the quality of service reviews. The advance bookings ensured parents, guardians, clients, and staff members were notified of the interview and had sufficient time to make any necessary arrangements to participate, if they chose. Because the new mandate focuses on the views of clients and their family members and guardians, it is important that they be available at the time of the interview.

During the visits, Committee members spoke with clients and their family members and guardians about the services they receive, and invited them to share their views on the quality of these services. For clients, family members, and guardians who were unable to attend the Committee's visits, survey forms were made available to provide an opportunity for them to share their views.

Individuals who chose to participate in the interview were asked for permission to have their comments included in the written report for that facility.

The Committee members also spoke with service providers and staff members to give them an opportunity to respond to the comments made by clients, family members, and guardians.

After each interview, the Committee members wrote a report reflecting the comments they heard, and expressing the views of the individuals they spoke to during the visit. A copy of the report was given to everyone who participated in the interview, including staff members and service providers, and was made available to other individuals involved with that facility who were unable to attend the interview. The report documents what the clients like as well as what they dislike, and is intended to give service providers valuable information about how they can change and improve the services they provide.

The Committee members also invited clients, family members, guardians, staff members, and service providers to provide feedback on the visit and the written report. This annual report summarizes the individual reports and feedback from each visit, and provides a collective message from the users of services to both service providers and the government.

Social Care Facilities

Under the *Social Care Facilities Review Committee Act*, social care facilities are facilities that receive direct or indirect funding from the government, including residential group homes, vocational training centres, single men's hostels, women's emergency shelters, unique homes, foster homes, and day care centres.

During the 1998/99 fiscal year, Committee members conducted quality of service reviews with clients, their family members, and guardians in a variety of facilities for adults: residential facilities, vocational training centres, and single men's hostels.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Residential facilities (group homes) provide individuals with physical and/or developmental disabilities or mental illnesses with a safe, healthy, and home-like environment.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

Vocational Training Centres provide employment opportunities for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities. The centres assist individuals to develop employment skills and to gain work experience.

SINGLE MEN'S HOSTELS

Single men's hostels provide shelter and assistance for men in need of temporary accommodation. Most hostels help individuals to improve their living skills, and obtain necessary medical services, as well as provide employment support.

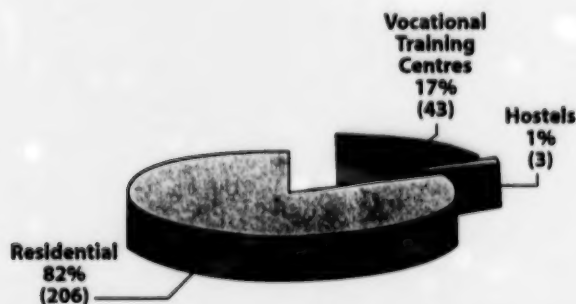


Figure 1. Visits by facility type

In the 1998/99 fiscal year, the Committee visited a total of 251 adult facilities¹. The majority of the visits, 82% or 206, were to residential facilities for adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities. Forty-three visits (17%) were made to vocational training centres providing employment preparation services. One facility housed both a vocational training centre and a residence. The Committee also visited three single men's hostels.

¹ Comparisons to previous years cannot be made because the visits are of a different nature. In the past, when Committee members visited facilities, they did not speak directly with clients, family members, guardians, or staff members.

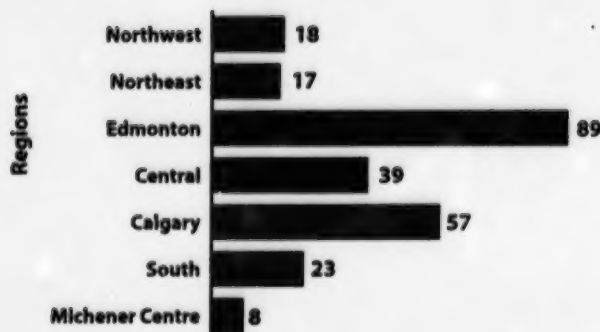


Figure 2: Number of visits by region

Figure 2 shows the number of visits to facilities in six regions of the province, as well as to Michener Centre. While these regions correspond to the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Community Boards, the hostels and some of the residential facilities visited in these regions receive direct or indirect government funding through means other than the PDD boards. Two of the three hostels that were visited are in Calgary and one is located in Edmonton.

Highlights of the Reviews

VISITS WITH CLIENTS, FAMILIES, AND GUARDIANS

The Committee interviewed a total of 1,277 clients. This was approximately 46% of all clients involved with the 251 facilities visited. In some cases, clients were unavailable or chose to not participate in the interview. Some clients who are non-verbal had family members or staff members speak on their behalf, and used body language to communicate their agreement with what was said. Another 458 family members and guardians also participated in the interviews. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of the clients, family members, and guardians interviewed in six regions in the province and Michener Centre.

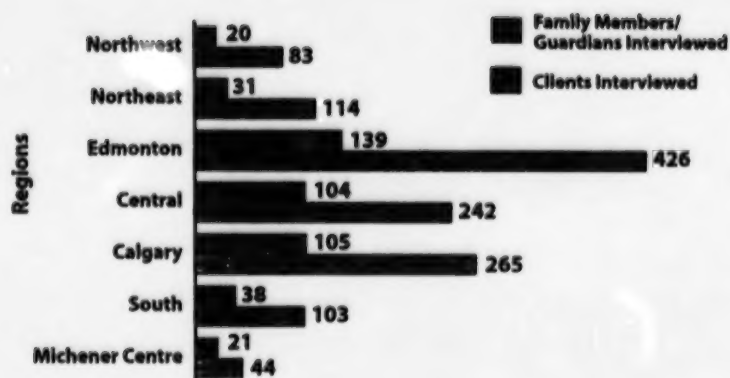


Figure 3: Number of clients, family members, and guardians interviewed

The Committee members asked clients, family members, and guardians open-ended questions about the physical environment of the facility, the clients' daily routines, meals and food they are served, the social and recreational activities they participate in, as well as their relationships with staff, service providers, and other clients. Committee members listened to clients and family members as they talked about these themes, as well as other aspects of services that were of interest to the participants.

WHAT THEY SAID

The reports were analyzed for common themes, and comments were categorized as positive (satisfaction and praise) or negative (dissatisfaction and criticism). In general, clients, family members, and guardians expressed high satisfaction with the physical environment, daily routines, meals and food, recreational and social activities, relationships with staff members, and relationships among clients. Lower satisfaction was expressed regarding additional topics of concern raised by the participants: staff turnover, staff salaries, and transportation services. Overall satisfaction with the quality of services was very high.

In the tables below, since both positive and negative comments were expressed about a given theme at some

*Highlights of the Reviews
continued*

facilities, the percentages for positive and negative comments may exceed 100%. Also, since the Committee members asked open-ended questions, and participants were given the opportunity to talk about any issues of concern or interest to them, not all themes were discussed at all facilities. For each topic, representative comments from clients, as well as family members and guardians at various facilities are included.

A total of 93 clients and family members who were unable to attend the interviews completed survey forms. Their responses and comments are included in the analysis below.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<i>% Facilities where comments were made</i>	
<i>% Positive COMMENTS</i>	<i>% Negative COMMENTS</i>
96.3	15.3

Client

My bedroom is my private room. I don't want anyone to come into my room unless they knock and I let them in. Sometimes I like to be alone. They respect my privacy. I like it that way. I don't want anything in this house to change. I like it here.

Clients, family members, and guardians at 216 facilities made observations about the physical environment of their facility. Positive comments were made at 96.3% of these facilities, and negative comments were mentioned at 15.3%. Most participants expressed satisfaction with the clients' bedrooms and personal space in the facilities, although in a few facilities, clients mentioned that their bedrooms are too small and there is not enough private space in their home. Participants expressed satisfaction about facilities that are accessible to people using wheelchairs, both in terms of the interior layout of the rooms, size of doorways, and placement of furniture and counters, as well as ramps to exterior doors. Dissatisfaction was expressed at facilities where the physical space had not been adequately modified for persons using wheelchairs. Satisfaction was high in facilities that participants considered clean, well maintained, and safe. Some participants expressed concerns about furniture or furnishings that are damaged and worn out and require replacement, as well as facilities that require renovations. Some participants at residential facilities also considered outdoor space for social and recreational activities important. At some facilities, positive interactions with neighbours were a source of satisfaction. A convenient location was also mentioned at some interviews.

Physical Environment
continued

Clients at various facilities said:

My bedroom is nice and comfortable and I feel lucky to live here.

We all have our own bedrooms. I have my own radio, TV, and phone in my room. I like living here.

The neighbours didn't understand us at first, but now we say hello.

This place is too small. We need more room to move around. It needs to be fixed up.

This home is a little too far from my work. It takes me forty-five minutes to get to work on public transportation.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

I have always thought that it is a really cool place to come to. It is colourful, bright, and accessible. Whoever designed it was really creative. The physical layout is marvellous.

It is homey when you walk in. Toys are on the floor, music is playing, and dinner is cooking. It's a very cosy feeling and I like it.

The ramp at the entrance to the home and the open common areas inside the home make it easy for clients to get around in their wheelchairs. And everyone enjoys the deck in nice weather.

Some rooms are very cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. Some rooms are too dark and the beds are falling apart. The building is old and out of date. Some things cannot be repaired.

DAILY ROUTINE

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
98.6	4.1

Daily routine was discussed at 220 facilities. Participants expressed satisfaction and praise at 98.6% of these facilities, and criticisms and concerns at 4.1%. Participants said they are satisfied with daily routines that provide clients with flexibility, variety, and choice. Satisfactory routines also meet the needs of individuals, foster independence, and encourage clients to participate in meaningful activities. At facilities where concerns

Family Member/Guardian

The routine is geared to the individual needs, and doesn't change much from one day to the next. They need that consistency. It brings a sense of order and security to their lives. Changes to her routine confuse and upset my daughter.

were mentioned, some participants felt the routine was too regimented and scheduled, and that made the facility seem more like an institution than a home. Where the interviews occurred in residential facilities, comments about daily routine addressed the full scope of daily activities, including weekdays and weekends; however, at vocational training centres, the discussions focused on the hours of the day the clients spend at the centre.

Clients at various facilities said:

I am really busy every day and I like everything I do.
Tuesday is my stay at home day to help with the housecleaning.
We have rules, but they are fair for everyone.
The pay of \$1.00 per hour is an issue. We can only work 29 hours per week. We get paid too little. There is no way to save money to move out of here. (Comments made at a hostel/transition home).

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

The staff work hard to give the clients meaningful and productive choices in daily activities. The clients find it extremely satisfying to be here, and when they go home, they are tired.
Work experience gives our children public exposure and the citizens get to know and understand them. I think this centre is doing a good job.
I am pleased with the opportunities that are provided for the clients. It helps them develop self-esteem and self-worth. I have seen a significant improvement in the attitude and abilities of my child since he started to attend this program.
The two staff are stretched way too far with these six clients with multiple disabilities. Everything is very scheduled and routine. Staff focus on the physical and personal care needs of the residents, and don't have much time left over for social and emotional needs. Service should be holistic. Personal care is not the clients' entire lives.

*Daily Routine
continued*

It's regimented. They all eat at the same time, dress at the same time, go to bed, and have a bath at the same time. Where is the individuality? It's more institutionalized than it should be.

Residents don't get enough stimulation.

There is not enough variety of activities in the day program.

There is too much emphasis on training.

MEALS/FOOD

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
99.5	4.5

Client

We do all the cooking in the home. We plan the menus. We make shopping lists and go shopping for food. We take turns cooking the meals. The food is much better here than when I lived on my own.

Clients, family members, and guardians expressed their views about meals and food at 222 facilities. At 99.5% of these facilities, participants expressed satisfaction with the variety, choice, and nutritional value of the foods that are served. They also praised facilities where clients are involved in making decisions about the meals and where their likes and dislikes are considered. They talked about the satisfaction clients experience from participating in shopping for groceries, and planning and preparing meals. Some concerns and criticisms were mentioned at 4.5% of the facilities. Some clients mentioned specific foods they do not like being served and others commented that the quantity, quality, or variety of food was insufficient. At several homes, clients complained about the poor quality of food that is prepared at a central commissary and delivered to the homes. Since most of the vocational training centres do not provide meals for clients, this topic was not discussed at those facilities.

Clients at various facilities said:

I don't eat beef. The staff know that and they let me make something else.

It is my job to make the coffee. I really enjoy making coffee for everyone who wants it.

The food is garbage. It's not cooked right. Sometimes it's hot; sometimes it's cold. We want to cook our own food. I want the [central] kitchen closed.

*Meals/Food
continued*

Family members and guardians said:

Every time I drop in, they are having a well-balanced meal. And I drop in without warning. I don't think we can complain about the food.

I'd like to receive a monthly menu, because this would allow me to see what staff give the residents to eat and to check the diet. What a resident likes to eat isn't necessarily good for him.

Once a client knocked over his food tray and then knocked over another client's tray and there was no extra food to replace it.

RECREATIONAL/SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
99.5	10.8

Family Member/Guardian

It is remarkable to see how the clients have responded to music therapy. They used to get up and walk away. Now they stay and play their instruments. They each have a favourite song.

Recreational and social activities were discussed at 213 facilities. Satisfaction was high at most of these facilities (99.5%). Concerns and criticisms were also mentioned at 10.8% of the facilities. Participants in the interviews considered variety and individual choice important, and talked positively about activities that meet the clients' needs, encourage participation and integration in the community, and involve family members. Many clients and their family members value the special events and celebrations of holidays and birthdays that are observed at residential facilities. Holidays and vacations were a source of satisfaction for many clients, although some participants expressed concern about the expense for clients with limited funds. The high cost of some activities, such as movies, sports events, and concerts was also a concern for some participants.

Clients at various facilities said:

One morning a week I help out at a day care. I go by bus with a staff member. Then we have hotdogs downtown for lunch and go shopping in the afternoon. I like doing that.

I'm looking forward to moving next door. My friends live there and there is a place for me there. I will be happy with

people who like to do the same things like play music and games. They are my good friends.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

Lately, the level of activities provided to the clients has been excellent. They go swimming and bowling, see movies at the theatre, attend hockey games, and participate in a lot of other local recreational activities. Staff members are open to our suggestions and they arrange as many activities as possible. I think my daughter really enjoys the variety.

Staff members sometimes encourage clients to go on elaborate holidays that are expensive, rather than less expensive vacations closer to home. This is making it prohibitive for other clients, who don't have as much money, to enjoy similar holidays since the clients must pay expenses for themselves and the staff members who accompany them.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF MEMBERS

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
100.0	7.8

Clients, family members, and guardians expressed satisfaction about their relationships with staff members at all 218 facilities where the issue was discussed. At 7.8% of the facilities, some concerns and criticisms were also mentioned. Many participants said that staff members are committed, friendly, supportive, helpful, and caring. Some clients mentioned they appreciate staff members who listen to their concerns and spend one-on-one time with them. At vocational training centres, clients said they value staff who explain things to them and help them learn how to perform tasks. Parents and guardians frequently commented on the importance of regular communication with staff members. Satisfaction with relationships was lower at facilities where participants felt their communication with staff members was irregular or inadequate. Many participants at residential facilities mentioned that staff members and clients were like family and this created a home-like atmosphere in the facility.

*Relationships With Staff
Members continued*

Family Member/Guardian

The staff are open and friendly. This home is like a big family.

Clients at various facilities said:

I get help from staff members when I need it.

I like it here. I like the staff. They are good people. We talk. If we have a problem with something, the staff help us. They teach us how to do it. We are good friends.

I don't like getting yelled at.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

I have nothing but good things to say about this house. Everyone here is caring and concerned.

I have been her Public Guardian for ten years. I feel that the staff in this home are really amazing. They are strong advocates for my client, they care, and are in constant contact with me. The staff show real affection toward my client. I have seen her grow. She has gained weight, shows affection, and walks with assistance. She used to scream and cry a lot, but now she is much calmer. I'm amazed at her progress.

We are welcome here and the staff are delighted to see us. We are in constant communication with the staff and when there are concerns, they are quickly addressed.

My son worships the staff. They are very good to him.

The government did very well when they moved clients from institutions into group homes. Now that he is in a group home, my son has begun to speak out loud, tries things he has never done before, and is learning to control his emotions.

When an accident happens, staff tell us they can't be everywhere all the time.

Some staff think they know better than anyone else what is good for a client.

Some new staff are not aware of the needs and personalities of the clients.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CLIENTS

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
96.0	8.0

Client

I am happy living here.

*This is my home. I like to
visit my mom, but I am
happy to come home again
to my friends.*

Relationships among clients were discussed at 125 facilities. At 96.0% of these facilities, clients, family members, and guardians spoke about their satisfaction with client to client relationships. Many participants commented that the clients are compatible, friendly, supportive, and helpful to each other. Many also mentioned that the clients consider the residential facility their home and the other clients and staff are like family to them. At 8.0% of the facilities concerns about client to client relationships were discussed. Some participants raised concerns about clients who are not well matched with other clients in the facility, in terms of interests, abilities, or activity level, or individual clients whose negative behaviours affect other residents.

Clients at various facilities said:

If I had to move, I'd miss all my buddies here.

I don't like it when my roommates yell and get mad, it is too noisy, and it hurts my ears.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

The dynamics in this house are like any family. There are squabbles and normal jealousies, but generally the residents like each other and are very aware of, and concerned about, each other.

As the years go by, the clients are growing together more. They ask for each other now when someone is away.

Five in a house is a nice number. It's like a family. It is not like an institution. It's a home.

I would like my daughter to be with other residents who talk more. But to move her now would cause turmoil. She is comfortable here.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

% Facilities where comments were made

% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
18.3	84.5

Family Member/Guardian

Transportation to day programs and other activities is a problem. The services provided for persons with disabilities are inadequate. Some clients are required to ride a bus for two hours to reach the day program site. This tiresome ride often produces negative behaviours and discourages them from participating in programs.

Clients, family members, and guardians raised the issue of transportation services at 71 facilities. The participants' comments were negative at the majority of these facilities (84.5%). Participants expressed concerns about the lack of availability of the services, the high cost, and the amount of time clients waste waiting to be transported between their homes and day programs, places of employment, and other activities. Participants were more satisfied with transportation services where facilities had private vehicles for their own use and less satisfied with transportation services for adults with disabilities that are provided through municipalities or private agencies.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

I am not happy with the transportation service. On many occasions the waiting time is too long. Clients sit in their wheelchairs, dressed in their winter coats, waiting 45 minutes for the bus to arrive.

They cancel trips without any advance notice. Sometimes the transportation service will fail to pick up clients and they are left at their day programs without any means of getting home.

We are very fortunate to have a van here for transporting the residents. These clients lead an active lifestyle and having the use of their own van makes it more convenient for them to participate in a variety of activities.

STAFF TURNOVER AND STAFFING LEVELS

% Facilities where comments were made

% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
22.7	79.5

Clients, family members, and guardians at 44 facilities discussed staff turnover and staffing levels. Participants expressed concerns about frequent changes in staff, and the disruptive effects this has on clients' sense of security and stability. They also voiced their views that low staff wages and funding cutbacks are the primary causes of the turnover in staff. Participants in some facilities felt the level of staffing was

*Staff Turnover and
Staffing Levels
continued*

Family Member/Guardian

*It is hard when staff change.
She gets attached to one, and
if that person isn't there, she
misses them.*

inadequate, and this limited the activities clients could participate in. At 79.5% of the facilities where this issue was discussed, clients, parents, and guardians expressed concerns about staff turnover and staffing levels. At 22.7% of the facilities, participants made positive comments about these issues. Participants were most satisfied at facilities where staff turnover was low and individuals had worked at the facility for many years.

Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

The care is stable during the week, but there is a high turnover of weekend and holiday staff. The weekend and holiday staff are not familiar with the clients and this creates tensions and problems.

I hate to see the quality of care declining. There are not enough staff because the funding isn't there. There have been too many cut backs. People don't realize how much work there is to look after six handicapped male adults.

The only thing I see that's wrong about this place is the changeover in staff, and that has a lot to do with the pay scale. The don't earn as much as employees at government group homes, and if they can go somewhere else and get \$1,000 a month more, why wouldn't they? We've had some superior people here and they've moved on.

Sometimes in the evening there is only one staff member on duty and that prevents the clients from going out.

I'm too afraid to leave my son on weekends. There just are not enough staff. I'd love to take a weekend off, but I can't because I'd be just too worried.

STAFF WAGES

% Facilities where comments were made	
% Positive COMMENTS	% Negative COMMENTS
7.1	96.4

Clients, family members, and guardians commented on staff wages at 84 facilities, and expressed concerns at 96.4% of these facilities. The participants talked about the inadequacy of the wages for staff working in private and non-profit agencies, particularly in comparison to government employees working

*Staff Wages
continued*

Family Member/Guardian

*We should never undervalue
the importance of money.
This is a very demanding
profession and staff deserve
proper compensation.*

in similar facilities. They also expressed concerns about the negative effects of low wages on staff commitment and morale.

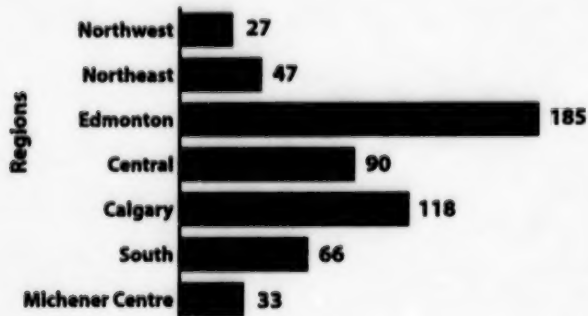
Family members and guardians at various facilities said:

*Staff are not paid enough for the work they do or the care they
give to clients.*

*Staff members should be paid higher wages. The staff are not
paid enough for the dedication they bring to the job.*

VISITS WITH STAFF AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Committee members talked to service providers and staff members to give them an opportunity to respond to the comments made by clients, family members, and guardians. Committee members also listened as staff and service providers raised their own concerns.



**Figure 4: Number of staff members and
service providers interviewed**

A total of 566 staff members and service providers were interviewed. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of staff members and service providers interviewed within six regions throughout the province and Michener Centre.

WHAT THEY SAID

Most of the service providers and staff members agreed with the clients', family members', and guardians' comments regarding the major themes, including physical environment, daily routines, meals and food, social and recreational activities, and relationships. Many service providers and staff members also talked about the challenges of their jobs, as well as the rewards, and the personal satisfaction they experience working with persons with physical and developmental disabilities. Many mentioned the importance of family members and guardians taking an active role in the lives of clients, as well as the significant contributions made by understanding and supportive neighbours and communities. The following are typical comments from staff members and service providers:

**Staff Member/
Service Provider**

We have very involved parents, and we're just like a big happy family. They all know each other and get along well.

The clients have so much to teach us. We just need to learn how to listen to them. We can easily take care of the body, but it is important to take care of the soul—that has deeper meaning.

This has been the most fulfilling job I have ever had. I have experienced a lot of personal growth and I am getting as much as I am giving.

Our neighbours are great. They are very receptive to the group home's presence, and to the clients. One neighbour clears snow from our sidewalks and driveways at 6:30 in the morning so the clients have no problem getting to their day programs.

Sometimes we borrow gardening tools. The clients bring them thank-you cards and cookies.

Staff members and service providers echoed the concerns of clients, parents, and guardians around the following issues directly related to quality of services:

Poor transportation services for adults with disabilities

Staff and service providers identified poor transportation as a major barrier to community inclusion for their clients. Booking trips, particularly during peak hours when clients have vocational activities with day programs, is extremely

difficult. Also, they felt that having to book transportation far in advance hampers independence and spontaneity of clients. Some staff indicated that buses frequently do not wait long enough for clients, and that some drivers are not adequately trained to deal with clients.

Minimal opportunities for community involvement and integration

Staff and service providers wished for more resources, more community understanding, and more participation in the community. Some indicated they would like to have more social get-togethers with other people in the community and believe that more money should be put into educating the public to appreciate and accept their clients.

Aging clients with increased needs

Staff and service providers agreed that the lives of their clients are changing and will change even more rapidly as they enter their senior years. Clients will require more and different care as they age, and funding will have to increase to keep up with the need for added services. Staff pointed out that current day programs and employment programs will not be appropriate for older clients. They also said that services should be provided to clients in their homes so that they do not have to move as they age.

Staff members and service providers also shared concerns raised by clients, parents, and guardians around issues they feel hinder staff from providing the best possible services. They discussed the following issues:

Inadequate staffing levels

Staff said there is a need for higher staffing levels and more supports in many homes. Many felt that, given all the work needed to run a household, they do not have enough time to spend with clients and meet their needs. Staff felt that this also has an impact on their ability to involve clients in activities outside the home.

High staff turnover

Staff and service providers also identified high staff turnover as an issue. They said that because of the low wages, few employees consider the human services industry as a lifetime career. They noted that staff turnover negatively affects how some staff view their jobs, and also recognized the negative effect it has on clients.

Inadequate wages to hire and keep skilled and educated employees in the profession

Staff and service providers stated that wages in the industry are too low. They felt that the wages do not adequately reflect the responsibilities of the profession and the training required. Some mentioned that employees who work with high-needs clients ought to be rewarded on a scale that reflects the additional work.

Some staff also felt the community perceives them as volunteers, but they pointed out that these are their jobs, and they support their families on these earnings.

More funding required for professional development and training

Staff and service providers emphasized the need to continue to receive training dollars for staff, particularly in rural areas where there are few trained staff available. Some staff also said they would like to see more professional development courses on topics such as "Stress Management," and "Behavioural Management," and that these courses must be accessible to staff.

Feedback on Visits

All participants were invited to provide feedback on the Committee's visit to their facility by completing a visit feedback form. A total of 184 individuals responded. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

	Responses	
	YES	NO
Were the date and time of the visit convenient?	89.1%	10.9%
Did you receive enough information about the purpose of the visit?	90.0%	10.0%
Was there any other information you could have used prior to the visit?	14.7%	85.3%
Do you believe that your clients and their families had a good understanding of the purpose of the visit?	85.9%	14.1%
Did you have adequate opportunity to speak to the Committee members before and after the visit?	74.4%	25.6%
Did you feel the Committee members were well informed about their job?	86.4%	13.6%

Figure 5: Participants' feedback on visits

In general, feedback on the visits was very positive. In their comments, respondents praised the Committee members for their professional, knowledgeable, and personable approach to the interviews. Respondents provided useful insights that will be considered to improve the visit process in the future.

Typical Comments:

Visit Feedback

I appreciated the opportunity to voice my concerns.

The Committee members did a good job. It was refreshing to see the change in emphasis in their visit to focus on the individuals living here.

I enjoyed the meeting. The Committee members were friendly, non-threatening, and respectful. They made everyone feel

Feedback On Visits
continued

relaxed. They listened. I felt we could express our opinions freely and honestly.

Greater advance notice of the visit would be helpful. More parents and guardians might have been able to attend if they had more warning of the visit.

**Feedback
on Reports**

Copies of the reports were sent to the clients, family members, guardians, service providers, and staff members at the facilities. All individuals were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the report, including individuals who had not participated in the interview. A total of 149 individuals completed feedback forms to evaluate the report from their facility: 133 clients, family members, and guardians and 16 staff members and service providers. The following table summarizes their responses.

		<i>Responses</i>	
		<i>Clients/Family Members</i>	<i>Staff Members/Service Providers</i>
Overall, what is your reaction to the report?	<i>Positive</i>	66.9%	64.3%
	<i>Negative</i>	12.0%	28.6%
	<i>Other/No Comment</i>	21.1%	7.1%
Was your receipt of the report timely?	<i>Yes</i>	53.4%	64.3%
	<i>No</i>	45.9%	28.6%
	<i>No Comment</i>	0.8%	7.1%
Does the report accurately reflect your views? ²	<i>Yes</i>	77.4%	N/A
	<i>No</i>	22.6%	
Do you plan to make any changes as a result of the report? ³	<i>Yes</i>	N/A	21.4%
	<i>No</i>		64.3%
	<i>No Comment</i>		14.3%

Figure 6: Respondents' feedback on reports

² Only clients, family members, and guardians were asked this question.

³ Only staff members and service providers were asked this question.

*Feedback on Reports
continued*

Report Feedback

*The report is very
accurate and provides a
visual picture of the home
and daily routine.*

Participants who completed feedback forms expressed high overall satisfaction with the reports. Some individuals noted that there were specific minor inaccuracies in the reports, and many individuals used the feedback forms to reiterate concerns about various issues, such as transportation services or high staff turnover, in addition to commenting on the quality and accuracy of the report itself.

Some individuals felt they did not receive the report in a timely manner. While the Committee aimed to provide the report within 6 weeks of the visit, this did not always occur. Various mechanisms have been implemented to streamline the process for the coming year.

Most clients, family members, and guardians who completed feedback forms agreed that the report accurately reflected their views. Service providers were asked whether they intend to make changes as a result of the report, and some respondents indicated that they would make changes.

Typical Comments:

I would be pleased to see immediate action on the report. How will this information be used? Will it make a difference?

Four months is a relatively long wait for a report. I had forgotten about the meeting by the time I received the report.

As a result of the report I want to monitor staff-client relationships more closely to facilitate better relationships.

EXPENDITURES

The expenditures of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee for the reporting period of April 1, 1998 to March 31, 1999 were \$100,000. The average cost per visit was approximately \$398.00. Costs included the Committee members' travel and accommodation expenses and honoraria, as well as expenses for an orientation session and training sessions. For each visit, two Committee members spent two to three hours at the facility and an additional one to two hours writing the report.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the 1998/99 fiscal year, Committee members visited 251 adult social care facilities and spoke with 2,301 individuals. The Committee members prepared a report for each visit that summarizes the comments of participants in the interview. The visits gave users of the services an opportunity to voice their views on the quality of services they receive, both in terms of the aspects they like, as well as those they dislike. The reports are permanent records of the visits, and they contain valuable suggestions for service providers to change and improve their services to better meet the needs of clients. This annual report is a summary of the individual reports and feedback forms from each of the visits, and provides a collective message to both service providers and the government from clients and their families.

In addition to visiting most of the adult social care facilities, Committee members held meetings and training sessions regularly throughout the year. They invited representatives from government ministries and community agencies to provide training sessions. Some of the topics discussed included an overview of persons with developmental disabilities, techniques for interviewing individuals who are non-verbal, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* Act, the structure of the PDD Boards, the Partnership on Accreditation and Core Standards, conducting group interviews, and writing reports.

Guest speakers were invited from the following organizations:

- Alberta Association for Community Living
- Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres
- Alberta Family and Social Services
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities Provincial Board
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Central Community Board
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Northwest Community Board
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Southern Alberta Association for Community Living

A database was developed to help track visits, feedback, and quality of service reports. This database was instrumental in organizing the work of the Committee and completing the Annual Report.

The Social Care Facilities Review Committee also implemented a self-assessment process to help the Committee members review their performance over the year, and identify areas where they would like additional training in preparation for the coming year.

In January 1999, Committee members participated in information gathering and planning sessions with selected day care operators to discuss suitable processes and procedures for

conducting quality of service reviews in day care centres—the Committee's focus in the 1999/2000 fiscal year. Their recommendations were included in the training and orientation session to launch the 1999/2000 Committee.

In March 1999, Committee members attended a wrap-up session where they reviewed the past year and made recommendations for the coming year.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Several Committee members reflected on their experiences throughout the year and provided the following comments:

Carol Brown

I was impressed with the staff. There are a lot of experienced and dedicated staff at these facilities who are well liked and appreciated by the parents and clients. They take their jobs seriously, and they treat the clients with patience and care. Some even work on their days off.

I learned a lot. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to get involved in something like this. I had a good feeling about almost all of the homes I visited. Everyone was so warm and receptive to us. It was like walking into my best friend's home and having a visit. It was a worthwhile and fulfilling year—an experience I'm glad I had.

Just about everywhere we went across Alberta, unless the facility had their own means of transportation, the transportation services were a major issue.

Thomas Lukaszuk

Participating in the quality of service interviews was a unique experience of lending voice to those who are too often unheard.

Mickey McMaster

I would like to say what a rewarding first year I enjoyed on the Committee. I particularly enjoyed visiting the homes of many clients I had previously met when they lived at Michener Centre. It was wonderful to see the physical and mental growth they have made since moving to group homes.

I feel that staff in these facilities are very dedicated to their jobs, and it is my opinion that what they need most, apart from adequate wages, is recognition for the jobs they do.

Jean Wilkinson

The clients, parents, guardians, and service providers seemed to appreciate having the opportunity to voice their opinions and have someone actually interested in listening to them and working for them. It was a year of great satisfaction and learning for me.

Edith Zawadiuk

Through our visits last year, I realized that all human beings want, in some way, to contribute to their community—be it the community of their immediate family or the larger community where they work and play. And each and every one of us wants to be acknowledged for that contribution, however great or small it might be. Seeing the happy expressions on the clients' faces and hearing their enthusiastic voices as they told us their stories is something I will always remember. These are people we often overlook as inferior, powerless, and unimportant, but they do make a meaningful contribution to our society. They deserve to be heard and acknowledged.

NEW INITIATIVES, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES

Adapting to a new mandate presented many challenges for the Social Care Facilities Review Committee this year. The Committee members were required to develop new skill sets and processes to adapt to the new mandate, and change their focus from a role of inspection to one of reflection as they listened to and gathered the perspectives of clients, parents, and guardians. The quality of service reviews were well received in the community. Participants in the interviews were pleased with the Committee's new mandate.

In the coming year, the Social Care Facilities Review Committee will continue to provide a voice for clients through quality of service reviews. The focus of the reviews will move from adult facilities to children's facilities, with an emphasis on visits to day care centres. The Committee members will design new processes and procedures relevant to working with the new client group. Continuous learning will remain a priority, and speakers from relevant areas will be invited to help the Committee members orient to their new focus.

Another goal for the coming year is to implement an interview process to screen and select new Committee members from the list of individuals nominated for the Committee each year. The Committee members' self-assessments will also be used to determine re-appointments for the following year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success the Social Care Facilities Review Committee enjoyed over the 1998/1999 fiscal year was largely due to the enormous support it received from many sources. Many people took time out of their busy schedules to meet with Committee members. Clients and their family members and guardians deserve a special note of thanks for welcoming Committee members into the clients' homes, and taking time to share their thoughts and concerns about the services they receive. The assistance provided by the service providers and staff members to set up and facilitate the visits truly made these visits possible. The Committee members also thank all of the individuals from community agencies and government ministries whose valuable training and information sessions contributed to the continuous learning and development of the Social Care Facilities Review Committee.